

# Dune and Desire

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*“Is the Law the Thing? Certainly not. Yet I can only know of the Thing by means of the Law. In effect, I would not have had the idea to covet it if the Law hadn’t said: ‘Thou shalt not covet it.’ But the Thing finds a way by producing in me all kinds of covetousness thanks to the commandment, for without the Law the Thing is dead. But even without the Law, I was once alive. But when the commandment appeared, the Thing flared up, returned once again, I met my death. And for me, the commandment that was supposed to lead to life turned out to lead to death, for the Thing found a way and thanks to the commandment seduced me; through it I came to desire death.”*

—Jacques Lacan, “On the Moral Law”<sup>1</sup>



Figure 1. David Lynch, *Dune* (1984): assembling one of the spice-addicted oligarchs of the Guild established to secure the supply chain of this ecstasy-inducing substance. The form of the oligarchs is minimal, just enough to supply the idea of a body able to move about, speak, and (of course) ingest drugs. The Guild monster was designed by Carlo Rambaldi, the Italian master of special effects.

Among most architectural theorists, desire, in particular the desire related to love, is portrayed in positive, if not to say, Positivistic terms through objects that are desirable: beautiful figures, enchanting buildings, pleasant dreams, erotic relationships. However, it is in this latter object of desire that two economies diverge from the same human need. In the Romantic (non-ironic) Naturalism of second-generation phenomenologists descended from Heidegger, Ricour, and Gadamer, love is portrayed as a union where two distinctively separate entities meld into a transcendent singularity. The presupposition for this union is in most cases the conservative standard: male and female portrayed as a man and a woman in a “traditional” romantic engagement, subject to societal *mores* and popular fantasies of the boy-meets-girl variety.

It is no surprise that there are few surprises in the “Union Model.” Once the paradigm attaches to dis-course, the plot advances according to the exigencies of the standard obstacle design, which are the stuff and substances derived from the *Commedia dell’Arte*. Every union-based fantasy of desire attempts to land at the airport of a marriage, sometimes by auto-pilot, but hardly ever without a fight in the plane that imperils everyone on board. The landing is sexual, the release of *jouissance* following a build-up of nearly intolerable tension; but there is no follow-up on whether the sex was good or bad, creative or *per forma*, kinky or standard. Sex, in fact, does not come into it. This is a matter for the second main model of desire,

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lecture VII, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992), 83.

unsupported by Naturalism theory. This model derives from the legal principle of usufruct.<sup>2</sup> In short, this is the idea that you can use something or someone as long as you don't abuse your privileges. "Use Models" of sexual desire are at least as old as Lucretius, who specified that one partner's use of another precludes the other's use of the one, but that either partner can be the user, and this can switch. The Count de Sade modified this model to show how, in experience, each partner could use the other simultaneously, to achieve exclusively personal results; each could "instrumentalize" the body of the other to the point of objectification, or (and perhaps simultaneously) be him or her (these pronouns lose their relevance in this theory) converting self-objectification into the most intense form of *jouissance*.<sup>3</sup>

De Sade abandoned all attachment to the Union Model in favor of a Use Model, without the usual precautions of domesticating use as usufruct. In fact, *abuse* rather than allowable use was what de Sade had in mind; sexual abuse was but one component in de Sade's general theory of the world, where discord, suffering, destruction, catastrophe, etc. were critical and necessary for the furtherance of life, not just of humans and their biological companions, but of the most extensive organic construct, the *system* allowing for the very possibility of life.

Without destruction the earth would receive no nourishment and, as a result, there would be no possibility for man to reproduce his species. It is no doubt a fateful truth, since it proves in an invincible way that the vices and virtues of our social system are nothing, and that the very vices are more necessary than the virtues, because they are creative and the virtues are merely created; or, if you prefer, the vices are causes and the virtues no more than effects. ... A too perfect harmony would thus be a greater disadvantage than disorder; and if war discord and crime were banished from the earth, the power of the three realms would be too violent and would destroy in its turn all the other laws of nature.<sup>4</sup>

The idea is not original. Heraclitus had, in calling war the "mother of all things," pointed to continual turmoil not just as a necessity of fecundity but as fecundity itself. "War is the father and king of all: some he has made gods, and some men; some slaves and some free" (Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους). The strands of this thinking go from the pre-Socratics all the way to Marx, who in outlining the paradoxes of the superior *objective* power of the proletariat cited their *structural* inferiority in the same terms as de Sade had done with Justine in the bedroom.

Where power lies, exactly, in the bedroom or boardroom, is not such an easy matter to decide. Just so, the case of who is having more pleasure in the act that Kant would compare to simultaneous mutual cannibalism is equally unstable. Add to this Freud's observation that, even in a straightforward case of sexual congress, there are four people involved, necessities of the requirement that each must make love to both a fantasy projection of the lover as well as to their physical *corpus*. Here, structural weakness and objective strength offer so many opportunities for sparks to jump across wires that there can be nothing left of the circuit-board that is the ideal of the Union Model's binaries of hot/cold, love/hate, boy/girl, separation/

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Claude Milner, "Is Sexuality Compatible with Human Rights?" Slavoj Žižek with Jean-Claude Milner (podcast, July 7, 2018). [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_\\_qDJGT3Ims](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__qDJGT3Ims).

<sup>3</sup> Marquis de Sade, *The Story of Juliette*, vol. 6 (New York: Grove).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 78. Quoted in Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 210–211.

togetherness. In fact, the binary itself, as a formal device of logic, is utterly confounded by the way that the Use Model offers what can be accurately called “conronymic” options: the subjection of the powerful by the weaker element, the pleasure of humiliation, the inversion, subversion, and perversion of desire even when partners try their best to have “standard” sex.

The case for the perversities and complexities of the instrumental Use Model being more natural than the pretended naturalism of the binary boy–girl Union Model is proven by the historical precedence of the carnival, which, if anything, opened up the normative endogamy of any sexual system to exogamous enrichment of the nobility by the lower classes. If servants could father children in a take–over of aristocratic wombs, all the better for the resilience of the gene–pool whose need for requisite variety was co-extensive with the ability of the species to fight off external pathogens and internal structural collapse from inbreeding. Mikhail Bakhtin did all he could to find semantic consistency in the collective desire of societies to undergo the perennial chaos of the carnival, where excessive consumption and libidinous sexuality allow for a “new start,” at psychological, socio-political, and biological levels.<sup>5</sup> But, if we think that the carnival is somehow in cultural opposition to the dominating periods of conservative chastity and marital fidelity that temporally and ethnographically surround it, we would be making a mistake. As Lacan has pointed out, the extreme ritual chastity of the Provençal troubadours occurred “at the level of the signifier,” while all around it, “outside in the street” so to speak, there was rampant and unrestricted fucking.<sup>6</sup> This is to say that the one supported and allowed the other; that without the perverse–in–its–own–way rigorous chastity of the idealistic lover forbidden anything more than a glimpse of his beloved’s nakedness, there could be no general license in society at large. This anticipates the logic attributed to Dostoevsky by inverting his actual words: that if God happened not to exist, humans would not be able to do anything. Contrary to the idea that humans are restrained by religious piety, just the reverse is the case. Because God “exists” — like the troubadour, at the level of the signifier — everything “outside in the streets” is allowable. The purification of the signifier (the Symbolic) gives the go–ahead for unlimited contamination, in the Real of the street.

These issues are not addressed by the Unionists, if only because it is structurally impossible for them to abandon the binary by which instrumentalism objectifies and, thus, disqualifies the human subject as a candidate for love. In the Union Model of love, it is in fact difficult to maintain the simplest imbalance for fear of clouding the prospective success of the *copula*. Where, in the West’s first comprehensive document about love, Plato’s *Symposium*, the difference between lover and beloved is primary. As Kant would have put it had Kant been a fan of *The Big Lebowski*, “sometimes you eat the bear, sometimes the bear eats you.” The beloved cannot easily become a lover; certainly in the act of love a decision has to be made. But, this occurs at the “level of the signifier.” And, hence, the distinction becomes portable, independent of scale, and transferable from one partner to the other.

Once the distinction is in force, a Law exists; and everything else becomes possible. As de Sade would have it, love descends to the point of chaos, where a pure creativity manifests itself as pure destruction. Aristotle observed “that all animals become sad after sex” (paraphrase); just so, every conception of a human life begins with the parents undergoing a kind of death in the release–moment of *jouissance*. On the

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<sup>5</sup> Mikhael Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968).

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*.

micro-scale of phallic enjoyment, partners submit to a mutual hysteria where each reports pain as pleasure and pleasure as pain. The Lucretian model prevails, in the sense that, at any given moment, the question of the agent and object of instrumentality is indeterminate. The dehumanization that comes with self-objectification is voluntary, momentary, and spontaneous. This issue of distribution, which affects not only the temporality of the sex act but the involvements of various parts of the body deployed in various roles and guises, unsettles the issue. Inside the moments of sex, it is hard to say whether one is eating the bear or the bear is eating one.

The “sometimes” in Lebowsky’s cowboy’s assertion is the key word. It suggests that, after being eaten by the bear, there is a future. This is a future after death, or at least a death that is not fully effective as an eclipse of all consciousness. It is the future of a death-dream, or of Lacan’s “between the two deaths,” the interval defined by all cultures as lying between the point of literal death and a final symbolic reckoning. Slavoj Žižek has brought to bear Dostoevsky’s dire error by considering how, in a short story, “Bobok,” a man suffering auditory hallucinations unexpectedly overhears, while attending the funeral of a distant relative, the conversation of the dead. After death, the dead “enjoy” two or three months of extended consciousness, during which they are freed from earthly and social constraints. Able to do whatever they wish, they show a natural restraint. Instead of “spilling the beans” on their past indiscretions, they enjoy truthfulness with a kind of empty candor. Truthfulness is not about shame but, rather, the blank enjoyment of the suspension of the need to confess.

Here, I disagree with Žižek. God is not present in this interval between the two deaths. This was Dante’s discovery, when, importuned by the increasingly powerful merchants of Florence to describe an

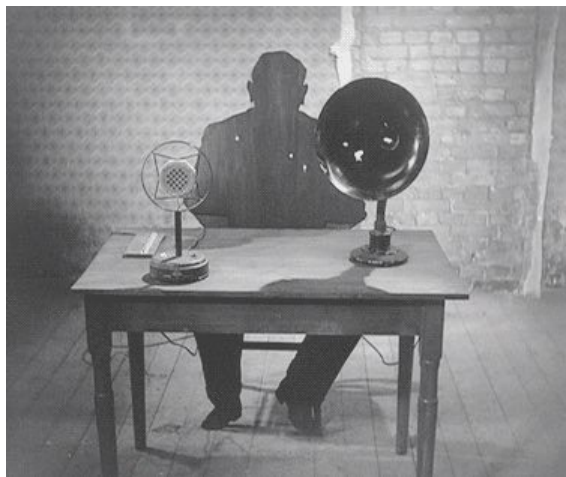


Figure 2. The effigy Other in Fritz Lang’s *The Testament of Doctor Mabuse* (Hungary, 1933). Dr. Mabuse, a criminal master-mind and hypnotist, spends his days inventing plans for crimes to be carried out by a gang who consults him only when he is concealed behind a curtain — shades of Pythagoras. The POV couple trying to unravel the mystery are imprisoned in the curtain room only to find out that there is nothing behind the curtain but a cut-out silhouette and a playback device.

extended period beyond death, where sins blocking the soul’s full entry into heaven could be purged, the poet realized that Purgatory was a voluntary, even gratuitous addition to the cosmic scheme. It was there simply to allay the anxieties of those who sought a system allowing a balance of payments, an economy of sinfulness that, in a final series of exchanges, could bring the books back into legality. The 3+1+3 design of Purgatory’s mountain suggests a palindromic tit for tat, a measure for measure, with the One as pivot. The use model is domesticated by an economy of checks and balances, or rather *cheques* and balances (in the financial sense of the term). Pay up and move on. The Old Testament’s “eye for an eye” is perfected, but if we look closely the 1:1 system automates God, allowing him to not pay attention. This is a better formulation of the atheist’s “God is dead” idea. It’s not that God is dead; it’s that he is “unconscious” or, as I prefer, “not paying attention.” God has walked away from the human situation, lured by some distraction. We humans discover that we are not his favorite form of being. We are the neglected child who, not getting enough from our parents in

childhood, live our adult life in pursuit of *collecting things*. We have heard God speak, but it turned out to be a recording, like the one revealed in Fritz Lang's *Testament of Doctor Mabuse*: not the real thing, the master, but the Real Thing in the Freudian sense — a void, an empty place, a “voice and nothing more.” This nothing of course is worse than the something that had been the paternal law-giving God. It is a nothing that makes things worse, that restricts our freedom, that suck out all of the available truth by being a forced choice that, while leaving us with a life (“Your money or your life!”) leaves us with a life not worth living.

If God is “present” in the interval between the two deaths, it is present in this form of a void whose margins cannot be managed respectably. The image of the soul's wandering between death<sub>1</sub> and death<sub>2</sub> is thus the architectural primary, the Thesean labyrinth, which is a set of three fractals that are in turn sets of three fractals, which are in turn ... (you get the picture). The *mælstrom* of the void is that it's gravitational pull defeats all attempts to resist it. You will leave this world but enter another, just as devoid of hope. The futile resistance, the bear-eating experience of *being used*, used to the limit — literally! The Žižekian theme of “incontinence of the void” comes to bear (hah hah) on this event, since in the sexual paradigm of usufruct (“you can instrumentalize/objectify your sexual partners as long as you don't abuse them”) now has an existential plot point. This is the conversion function, what (I contend) Freud described as the “contact barrier” within the “neurone” to maintain near-zero circulation defended from internal and external stimulæ.<sup>7</sup> If you go inside and find yourself outside, the contact barrier is performing Lacanian extimacy to keep the system going (“so the subject doesn't have to die all over the place”) and the question of inside/outside does not equate to a bad infinity. This in short is the function of irrational numbers. They not only permit the “domestication” of motion within a fixed field (that is too easily mistaken for an Euclidian space) so that the function of *placement* can achieve optimal economy and growth.

This optimality has its “quantum” aspect, in that the consolidation of “deaths” experienced through the hungry hole of the place where God used to be allows “for everything” in the sense of equating actualities with possibilities and even “impossibilities,” since the impossible is impossible only in reference to a frame that is also going to be sucked into the void. This is the land of the Ersatz, the bogus venture, where whatever you think might happen will certainly happen, in a way that *certainty itself* (Vico's *certum*) has prophetic value. This is nothing more than the mathematician's employment of ersatz conjecture to tease out a difficult theoretical conundrum, where the fake idea evokes truth in the form of error reports that, when consolidated, amount to a negative image of what has originally been sought. In the opening scenes of Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, we see how the beginning of what may possibly be the death dream of an action photographer who was actually killed on his last assignment begins with the negative image of his penultimate assignment, a portrait of a woman for *Life Magazine*, Medusa-ed into “something you can't look at” but something that will “metonymically” echo at a distance throughout the film.

The quantum of God's automated absence, the reduction of Him to a “voice and nothing more,” by which nothing is possible under maximum penalty of The Law (think of Kafka), is that we move from the “everything is possible” of Dostoevsky's thesis to the “nothing is impossible” of the interval between the two deaths. Where there is a flop every time there's a flip, we go outside to go inside; and again there is the

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<sup>7</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Project for a Scientific Psychology” (1895), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 1, trans. James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud and assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: The Hogarth Press and The Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1950).

architecture of the interior courtyard (another element critical to the story of *Rear Window*) and the reverse travel (the villain can get access to the hero's apartment by going around the block).<sup>8</sup> The possibility of everything is what Slavoj Žižek has called the "reality of the virtual." Inverting the well-known expression, virtual reality, Žižek shows how, for each of Lacan's three main theoretical domains — the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real (the "RSI system") — accepted normalities depend on the spooky subtraction or addition of uncanny elements which are either *too proximate* or *suddenly distant*. This qualified the situation of absence/presence as a void between the <>, which is just as accurately depicted as an estimated ><. The over-proximity or sudden retreat are simultaneous within the void itself, making the Black Hole or *mælstrom* "incontinent" on every count and continent.

### *reality of the virtual*

Slavoj Žižek's treatment of virtuality is based on a reverse predication. Instead of "virtual reality" he discusses "the reality of the virtual." His argument is that, without the addition or subtraction of a virtual "part that is no part," no reality of any kind makes sense. Our subjectivity depends on this virtuality, which is always durably uncanny, in that the subtraction and/or addition resists being fully disclosed by language's rational resources. Žižek uses Lacan's RSI system to lay out the types of virtualities, beginning with the Imaginary, where perception of an object requires alienation of the viewer from the viewed but cannot succeed in fully purging the object from small traces of the viewer. In Symbolic relations, the example of the stern father who slaps the child reveals that the father's power lay in *not* slapping the child; that if he actually carries out his threat his power is lost entirely. In the case of Symbolic belief, we "have" beliefs by imagining that our beliefs are the beliefs of others, whom we must support. The most obvious example is children who say they believe in Santa Claus because their parents have pretended to believe in him, and they don't want to disappoint their parents or terminate the practice of getting gifts in this system of "symmetrical idiocy."

In matters of the reality of the virtual Real, matters intensify. The Lacanian idea of eximity (the inside-out conversion, the "intimate object" and "objective/automated subject") play in. Space and time are complicated by a "detached virtuality" (my term) that violates the rules of identity that specify that one thing cannot be in two places at once. The literary/dramatic themes of the double, travel through time, the story in the story, and the contamination of reality by the story or dream are the commonplaces of this. They point to the common nucleus of "dis-identity":  $A \neq A$ , the self that is estranged from itself, which is none other than the Freudian-Lacanian subject, split by its unconscious, a "knowing without knowing." So, the reality of the virtual goes to the heart of subjectivity, meaning that the commonplace "detached" virtualities open windows onto the scenery of this subjectivity, playing it out on the stage, screen, and page of fictional entertainments. These are like express lanes into the heart of complex theoretical issues, but they do not exempt theory from tough issues it would like to avoid. Rather, they lead to confrontation with these issues more efficiently and effectively, with the added benefit of offering a means of "ethnographical cross-checking" of abstract theoretical positions against the "disinterested" evidence of popular culture, folk practices, and the arts. For example, in positing the relation of the Lacanian idea of eximity to Spencer-

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<sup>8</sup> *Rear Window* literally diagrams the Ninth Canon of the "calculus of form," invented by the British mathematician George Spencer-Brown, *Laws of Form* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969). This Canon proposes that each boundary is, simultaneously, a double boundary, and that this doubling allows the outermost distinction to "re-enter the form" at the inner-most position.

Brown's Ninth Canon, we look to Hitchcock's *Rear Window* to find out how the villain, Thorwald, gains access to the hero's studio apartment. The graphics demonstrate/confirm the "psychics." Each is able to *correct* the other, converting orthography into orthopsychics.<sup>9</sup> Orthopsychics addresses directly the problem of what one says in light of the problem of not being able to say everything. This chooses "option A" from Gödel's menu: consistency or completeness, but not both. Consistency must, however, face the problem of the termination of what can be said in relation to what cannot be said. And, the problem (to put it as succinctly as possible) is that there is no way to distinguish this excluded remainder as a matter of contingency (not enough time, etc.) or a matter of structure (things that are "impossible" to say because they resist being put into language). This is Wittgenstein's enigmatic warning: "About those things we cannot speak, we must remain silent" (*Wovon man nicht sprechen kann, darüber muss man schweigen*).<sup>10</sup>

The question here is "why the *must*?" If something is impossible to say, for practical (contingent) or structural (logical) reasons, why is it then necessary to involve the question of a law-like prohibition and obedience, or duty to honor that prohibition? This is an excess reaching beyond the practical/logical limits of discourse, but it is critical, even crucial. The four "detached virtualities" are in fact solidly in this territory of converting the *can't* into a *shouldn't*. They in fact outline what happens in the case of disobedience — when thought or imagined action goes into the zone that has been cut off by the choice of consistency over completeness. By losing completeness ("I can't say it all"), the issue of truth depends on how the terminus of discourse takes into account the "extra-territorial" option of the Real of the virtual. These amount to a kind of space-travel, also a time-travel. The space is liminal, to say the least. It is a space and time of *impossibility*. It is also the space of the Use Model of sexualization, because, unlike the Union Model, Use requires this virtuality in order to recover a minimal stability within an ever-fluid condition of switching between object and subject, human and non-human, lover and beloved, cause and effect. The "autoerotic" phantasmagoria of indeterminacies requires its own "circuit board," so to speak; and here it is not unwarranted to refer to the quantum idea that all possibilities exist up to the point where one is selected. Selection itself is a *choice of consistency over completeness*. Selection is perforce an alienation from the truth of completeness, so it must make, out of the *margin* at which the whole has been *cut*, an account that rephrases the argument about the true.<sup>11</sup> It must re-configure the impossible as possible. It must render the Real as virtual.

How does this tally with the easily made distinction, in the case of theories of sex and love, between the Union Model and the Use Model? Both are historically durable. Both cross boundaries between theory and popular culture, where "naive" exponents of one or the other model seem to have got the theoretical

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<sup>9</sup> "Orthopsychics" could be said to be what Lacan's entire project attempted, namely a return to Freud to work out unfinished concepts and link them together in a more comprehensive way. Certainly, this is how Lacan portrayed his theoretical ambitions, by comparing them to Freud's followers who, leaving Freud's ideas in a ruined state, constructed work-arounds that suited their clients rather than any coherent theory. Lacan's emphasis on consistency over completeness was famous: "I always speak the truth. Not the whole truth, because there's no way, to say it all. Saying it all is literally impossible: words fail. Yet it's through this very impossibility that the truth holds onto the real." Jacques Lacan, Denis Hollier, Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson Source: *October* 40, Television (Spring, 1987): 6–50.

<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921).

<sup>11</sup> This is, essentially, Dan Collins' argument for "interpretation by the cut" (focusing on discontinuities and antagonisms) rather than "interpretation by punctuation" (layering of accounts, captioning, paraphrase). Dan Collins, "Stealing Money from Offices," *Lacunæ* 16 (July 2018): 105–124.

details “just right,” as if they were critical philosophers of the first water. Film theorist and Lacanian Todd McGowan has noted that, while second-rate films avidly employ “feel-good endings” that seem to resolve antagonisms in the Symbolic order, first-rate films avoid these entirely.<sup>12</sup> Instead, they insist on endings that, in their most palatable form, leave open any question of resolution or, at their purist and least ideological, portray the unavoidability of antagonism. It is easy to see how this contrast follows precisely the comparison of the Union Model with the Use Model. For the Unionists, union cannot be achieved without a fantasy supplement to paper over the lack that, in real life, prevents perfect mergers. Use modelers, in contrast, aim only to clarify and/or intensify the effects of de-humanization or objectification of the subject. The most intelligent Use Model ending in cinema will reveal the universality or portability of this reductionism, as if to say that one can take comfort in the idea that there is Use and nothing but Use in every aspect of experience. This is not to say that Use cannot be comic. In fact, the *essence* of Use Modeling is comedy, where antagonism, though it be resolved ideally in the ceremonial wedding at the end of the plot, ends there, with an explicit emphasis on the universality of difference, and the acceptance of the fantasies we must have to avoid looking at this Real directly. Moreover, the “detached virtuality” devices of the double, travel through time, story in a story, and contamination of reality by the dream or fiction are the basic building blocks of fantasy literature and comedy. Tragedy in contrast forces the audience to follow a chain of ever-tightening circumstances that rule out any possible escape. Antagonism is revealed just as it is on comedy, but it is identified with annihilation of all else. In comedy, antagonism forces acceptance of death and other negatives as, ultimately, enriching. If the death or expulsion of the *senex* is only a stand-in for this, all the better. If we live long enough, we will all be *senex* figures at some point; our deaths will enrich someone or something. But, for now, we use the comic wedding to celebrate the *fictionality* of Union, not cynically but by saying “So what? This is *life!*”<sup>13</sup>

### *what union models can't do*

While the Union Model is by far the most popular way of describing the experiences of love and sex, it is, as if in compensation for this successfulness, conceptually restricted. This is shown by the fact that the Use Model finds what may be its most famous philosophical exposure in *The Symposium*, Plato's masterful exposition of the antagonisms of love and its most detailed critical account in Lucretius's *De rerum naturæ*, where the Greek ideal of male love is expanded to a more general heterosexual or even trans-gender version.<sup>14</sup> In Lucretius, who does what to whom is binary, but only in terms of users and the used. As in couples dancing, there are only fixed “leads” and “follows,” not uniquely assigned to men or women. The Union Model must continually refer to what it must describe as a “standard” or “norm,” as if the valoriza-

<sup>12</sup> Todd McGowan, *Psychoanalytic Film Theory and The Rules of the Game* (New York, London, New Dehli, and Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2015), 9–13 and *passim*.

<sup>13</sup> In Mozart's *Così fan Tutti*, for example, the wager that the two female characters will quickly become faithless when a more attractive potential mate comes along is really about universality. “They're all like that!” does not exempt the male leads, whose participation in the bet conscripts their concealed desire to be attractive to women no matter in what disguise they present themselves. Their chauvinism is male only in that it is obverse to the feminine position of the “Yes, but . . .” Without universality, the principle of Use would mean little; with it, it generates the fractal-like symmetries essential to the opera and key to the staging of Mozart's music.

<sup>14</sup> Robert D. Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex: A Commentary on De Rerum Natura IV, 1030-1287 with Prolegomena, Text and Translation*, Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition xv (Leiden: Brill, 1987).



tion of heterosexual love was not to be doubted but, inexplicably, required continual support to counter an inner anxiety about the nature of this naturalness. In fact, Lucretius argues that in terms of Use, leads and follows shift continuously and fluidly. That to define a “male position” as being predominantly that of the user would not hold up to any realistic account of the imaginary and physical exchanges that must occur in any given instance of sexual encounter. Deriving ideas about men and women from sex, if carried out honestly, would undermine any clear identification of sexualization and gender. This is the inevitable conclusion of Use Models.

Union Models predominate in popular culture because of their relation to the necessity of fantasy in relation to the unbearable over-presence of the Real, and the Real’s negative role in creating antagonisms within the Symbolic networks of relationships that claim to hold society and culture (and ideas of individuals as autonomous identities) together. We must entertain the idea of Union just as we must learn to read films such as *The Sound of Music* as emancipatory treatises: how nuns can become sexy lovers, how stiff Australian patriarchy can give in to the serendipitous pleasures of play; how families can work like *Resistance* cells to outwit Nazi occupiers. Žižek has pointed out the necessity, in this reading, to suppress certain other obvious readings to create a “reality of the virtual.” Who, he asks, more resembles the true spirit of Nazi racism than the Austrians in the film who, dressed in colorful folk costumes to celebrate the homeland’s native and exclusionary joys, participate in the festival that is the climax of the film. Doesn’t the organizer, Max, epitomize the “colorful xenophobe” who pushes natives to “do their thing”? Isn’t the cold Baroness and the actual Nazis who ride into town more like stereotypes of urbane, thoroughly assimilated Jewish bureaucrats? And, isn’t the female lead, Maria (Julie Andrews), the expression of pure Arian nativism, who seems to literally “spring from the hills”?

We endure this ideological exercise by misreading the obvious clues, to put this film on the shelf next to other vindications of all those Europeans who, in the face of Nazi occupation, stood up against the oppressor. Thinking about the Real of the characters whose dress, actions, and associations clearly identify them as Nazis, better only by degree by being natives rather than invaders, is simply too much to bear. As in the end of comedy, where we leave the ceremony with the other guests and do not pursue the nuptial couple on their honeymoon sexual intensification, our virtual-repressed makes life in the Imaginary/Symbolic bearable. We prefer the grade-B movie ending to facing the Real of antagonism. But, even when we make this *mauvais fois* choice, we are demonstrating the superiority of the Use Model. We are, by acknowledging the flexibility of the user/used in the sex act, finding in our own personal reception of the work of art, relying on the same flexibility within the virtual set-up by which the bad guys become the good guys and *vice versa*. Without use there cannot be this virtual switching; without the virtual switching there cannot be the fantasy that makes the Union Model possible in the first place.

What Union Models can’t do is work in this generative mode, as a universal presupposition. The Use model is fundamental because it allows sex to take place. It is about the moment after the wedding ceremony, the actual Real of sexual encounter. It is the honeymoon seen from the inside, and the necessity to regard the Use exchanges as *technē*, or work done at the level of objects and subjects, humans and non-humans, parts and other parts. The integrity of the whole, a manifestation at the retail level, can only be enjoyed once, at the wholesale level, exchanges and material assemblies have taken place — the “shipping and handling” part of the final cost of pleasure. Union Models cannot follow the nuptial pair past the cer-

emony of Symbolic conjunction. Use models begin at this point and prove their effectiveness by enduring, sustaining, and replicating their logic.

The objection of Unionists has typically rested on contrasting the ideals of Unionism (harmony, resolution, peace, etc.) with the asymmetries implicit in the Use Model. With every user, there is a used and, hence, a violation, an tyranny, an *ab*-use. Love becomes, essentially, rape, but a rape “manifold” that continually reverses its polarity, continually negotiates its terms of consent and its allowable margins of violation. For Use, it is impossible to say that a man “typically” rapes the woman; for it is structurally impossible to find, in the sexual act, a stable polarity identical with the cultural–social positions associated with *man* and *woman* as stable entities. This generic, free–floating rape returns in fact to the ancient idea of rape as a trope for something entirely unrelated. In antiquity, female members of the household presided over the worship of family spirits at the hearthside. They were by definition “wedded to the flame,” as Fustel de Coulanges summarizes his collection of ancient Latin and Greek texts.<sup>15</sup> The laws of the *familii* governing the dispersed patriarchal units forbade abandonment of the hearth by its attendants. However, marriage between families had to be allowed, so a legal fiction was devised by which a daughter would be able to free herself from complicity in the illegal act of abduction by demonstrating resistance or passivity. Thus, an entire contingent of Sabine women could be appropriated “legally” by Roman suitors *if and only if* the action was carried out as rape.

This legal–religious subterfuge would seem ridiculous were it not preserved in the common custom of carrying the bride over the threshold of the “husband’s” house — to demonstrate that she (in the view of the *manes* and *lares* of her father’s household) is *not giving her consent*, that she is in effect innocent of abandonment and legally eligible to take over the duties of a new hearth and new gods. So it is that the single–most important symbol of the Union Model of culturally sanctioned sex, marriage, is at its historical and religious basis, the single–most important material artifact supporting the Use Model — *without which there could never be any institution of marriage, in any culture, at any period of time!* I use emphasis because this is a case where the *sine qua non* of one theory is, in reversed predication and refutation, the *sine qua non* of its antipode, its antithesis. The case is not one of part–by–part comparison and contrast but, rather, structural necessity. The Union Model is necessary at the level of the signifier where fantasy is required to paper over the gaps and antagonisms of the Real; but, for theory, the Use Model is what’s actually happening, here and everywhere, now and at all times, “out in the street.”

Two world–class theorists, one of culture the other of psychoanalysis, provide a basis for the Use Model, although this support has never been analyzed, if only because any analysis would lead to the conclusion that the cultural theorist and psychoanalyst are, essentially, the same person, theoretically speaking, although they are separated by nearly two and a half centuries. The cultural theorist is Giambattista Vico (1665–1744). The psychoanalyst is of course Jacques Lacan (1901–1981). While I have before made the case of a synergy connecting Vico’s and Lacan’s theories, the common ground of the Use Model constitutes a novelty, both rhetorically and critically.

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<sup>15</sup> Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City: A Study of the Religion, Laws, and Institutions of Greece and Rome*, trans. Willard Small (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006)

## *vico and lacan as speech*

Both the Neapolitan philosopher of culture, Giambattista Vico, and the anti-philosophical champion of Freud, Jacques Lacan, have a unique if not exclusive relation to rhetoric that sets their work apart from their respective fields.

What we know of Vico and Lacan should be considered, purely, as speech — not just as both the act of speech taken into consideration in the understanding of content, but as a particular *form* of relating the two levels of discourse, *énoncé*, the content, and *énonciation*, the speech act. Form has the status of a third thing in addition to the two levels. I distinguish it to set it apart for the important aim of defining Vichian/Lacanian form *as formless*. Why? Because, as formless I am able to describe the connection between speech and *jouissance*. If only the binary of content and act ruled speech, we could not locate *jouissance* as a performative element, an aim, or a product. In fact, *jouissance* is by definition un-locatable. That which is un-locatable is portable and *jouissance* is not only portable, it *confers portability*. It is behind the ability of women to transgress the boundaries of the hearth; it is what allows the de-territorialization of that is essential to psychoanalysis's universal claims. If *jouissance* is not a *lingua franca*, then what is? But, to show this one must avoid using the *forms* of pleasure as units of measure and instead focus on *form*, not just as structure but anti-structure: as a structure that follows the aims and procedures of the death drive, in continual re-constitution and autoerotic boundary-shifting. Under the jurisdiction of the death drive, the “formless form” produces *jouissance* whether the current generating it is positive or negative. Its “truth function” is akin to the logic of the forced choice, where the presence of two options conceals the fact that there is only one “option” (which then is not really an option, but only the forced complicity of the “used” by the superior “user”). When the gunman says “Your money or your life!” he/she is asking for the victim to willingly/passively accede to what amounts as an extortionist ultimatum. The victim *cannot* but comply, but the victim is being *asked to give his/her permission*. The privation of the situation demands that the proceedings be written as a transaction written in the modality of “prohibition.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Bruce Fink has nicely laid out the logical particulars of the forced choice. In terms of the standard truth table, where the possible positions are T,T, TF, FT, and FF, the conjecture “Your money or your life” rules out the “and” option, T,T. And, because if one gives up one’s life then the money is automatically forfeited, the TF and FF positions are also cancelled out. The only remaining “choice” is a choice only because it appears in the form of a proposition of conjunction; but the cancellation of alternatives “through the back door” of the choices involving death create an ideological mandate. The first alternative (give me your money, to spare your life) is really the only option; and it, as Fink comments, sucks out all of the available supply of truth that the other “alternative” would want to claim. This vacuum is real. It is cooking *sous vide*, “under a vacuum.” The vacuum of *sous vide* allows cooking to take place at a precise temperature; just so, logical cooking under the *sous vide* of the forced choice makes ideology possible by regulating precisely the temperature, which we should consider along a scale of hot (the humor of cholera) to cold (the humor of melancholy). Saying that the victim of the forced choice operates under a condition of prohibition means that a surplus is being created *ex nihilo* and that this surplus, though technically a fiction, has more power (heat) than logical necessity. This obliging of the victim is the required complicity of the auditor of speech (the “used” in the User Model) to provide the “right answer” that would otherwise be unobtainable. This is the historically established function of the rhetorical syllogism known as the “enthymeme,” where the audience silently provides the speaker’s unvoiced conclusions. Bruce Fink, “Alienation and Separation: Logical Moments of Lacan’s Dialectic of Desire,” *Newsletter of the Freudian Field* 4, 1 & 2 (Spring/Fall 1990): 78–119.

Both Vico and Lacan's writings have been called a "pain in the ass," because both have seemed to torture readers with *lacunæ*, circularities, repetitiveness, apparently arbitrary ornaments, sudden turns, unexpected endings, and seemingly serendipitous insertions. Both Vico's and Lacan's annoying styles have had their defenders. Margarita Frankel has pointed out that Vico's apparently gratuitous circles, loops, and spirals have followed the intentionally referenced design of the Cretan labyrinth.<sup>17</sup> As the linear text passes through imaginary radial lines and turning points, it executes maneuvers with the elegance of a horse doing *dressage*. Lacan's defenders may have paid him a higher compliment by suggesting that the style of the psychoanalyst's major collection, the *Écrits*, demonstrates that Lacan set out intentionally to copy the rebus style of the unconscious itself — in effect, to create an externalized, rhetorical "thinking machine" set loose for the audience to calibrate, re-configure, and deploy with the same randomization and fractal precision of the ancient device known as the *zairja*, a backward-calculating computer intended to disperse rather than assemble information.<sup>18</sup> The result of both Vico's and Lacan's rhetorical extimating procedures have in a sense out-Derrida'd Derrida by deconstructing not through *analysis* but, rather, through synthesis, akin to Hegel's "synthetic" and retroactive realization, in the synthesis of dialectic, that the truth had "been there all along" in the antagonism of the thesis and antithesis. By treating the truth of rhetoric as a *retroactive realization*, made silently by the *collective* of the auditors, both Vico and Lacan "extimated" the production of truth in the public space-time of the audience. The radical result of this cannot be underestimated. It, of course, has been completely overlooked by Union Model theorists who have attempted to appropriate Vico and Lacan on behalf of a standardized sex-equals-gender schema.

Lacan's defenders underscore this point, removing the production gap between the maker and the made that would have Lacan behind the curtain, like Pythagoras, delivering enigmatic messages that only an elite could understand.

Lacan's own great design is to "return to Freud" in order to articulate the full import of Freud's "essential message" that was expressed in [the] landmark work [Chapter VI of "the Dream-Work," 1900]. This means taking Freud's designation of the dream as a rebus "quite literally." But what does this mean? Lacan's own response to such a question is, at first blush, puzzling: "This derives from the agency [*l'instance*] in the dream of that same literal (or phonematic) structure in which the signifier is articulated and analysed in discourse.... Puzzling or not, this response nonetheless contains "the essential expression" of Lacan's own message about how to interpret Freud's fundamental insight, namely, that "the unconscious is structured in the most radical way like a language.... but Lacan's own message is locked up in an expression so obscure and enigmatic that for the uninitiated it constitutes a kind of rebus in itself."<sup>19</sup>

This is an extraordinary assessment. Fundamentally, the authors argue that Lacan sets up an experiment that is his *speech*, recorded in the written versions of the Seminars, that set up an "atmosphere" that

<sup>17</sup> Margherita Frankel, "The 'Dipintura' and the Structure of Vico's New Science as a Mirror of the World," in *Vico: Past and Present*, ed. Giorgio Tagliacozzo (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981), 43–51.

<sup>18</sup> The *zairja* was a real type of device invented by Arab, Jewish, and Christian mystics in the Eleventh Century.

<sup>19</sup> John P. Muller and William J. Richardson, *Lacan and Language, A Reader's Guide to Écrits* (New York: International Universities Press, 1982). Muller and Richardson's task was in part to undo the misunderstandings generated by Alan Sheridan, whose particular interpretation of Lacan seems to have been selective and unreviewed. Bruce Fink's 1996 translation was widely regarded as definitive and comprehensive, restoring many parts that had been left out of Sheridan's W. W. Norton 1977 edition.

evolves an externalized (let's use Lacan's term, "extimated") unconscious, *shared* by the entire audience. Later, I will be able to demonstrate that this is *precisely* Vico's idea of his own speech, as a rhetorical "enthymeme" whose "silent term" is voiced by the audience, *unconsciously* (Vico's term, "without reflection"). This if anything cements these two thinkers together. They both invent, independently, a means of externalizing an artificial unconscious that works like the subjective unconscious. They both *deploy* this automated, externalized unconscious as the *primary* basis of their thinking and not as a demonstration or representation of their thoughts elsewhere stated more literally. They both are *thinking outdoors*, so to speak. And — and this is completely extraordinary — they are, as far as I know, they are the *only thinkers in history* to conceive of doing this, with the possible exception of (1) Plato in his dialogs (considering the controversial advice given in *The Seventh Letter*, that one would never directly articulate what one thought to be true) and (2) Giulio Camillo, who wrote in his *l'Idea del Teatro* that the book was the "literal" architectural structure he called the theater of memory.<sup>20</sup> These "exceptions" do not diminish Vico's or Lacan's accomplishments. Vico certainly knew of both exceptions, Lacan was masterfully aware of Plato's ploy; so, it is possible that Vico and Lacan relied on their knowledge of these prior examples. The point is that they created this "external public mind" knowingly, with an eye to the *ersatz* and conjectural status of doing so. For Vico, *The New Science*, he claims, exists as it is rewritten by the reader, indicating both his intentions and awareness of the role of extimity. For Lacan, the proof is in his characterizations of his language as peculiar to the "teaching" aspect of the discourse of Analysis, where signifiers,  $S_2$ , and their master trope,  $S_1$ , are sublated or suppressed beneath the relation of the analyst to the desire of the analysand, whose *slips of the tongue* will reveal the rebus-like impulses of the unconscious to say something "mutely." Vico's version of mute speech is the "common mental language" that he says evolves for every culture in every period; a speech with signifiers produced "without reflection." It is clear that both thinkers are on the same pages.

### *the law of upside down*

The figure of *jouissance* as "formless form" uses the cultural commonplace of the carnival, the polymorphously perverse phantasmagoria of "everything being permitted" as long as God is on his throne, in the register of signifiers. The *matheme*  $S_2 \dots S_2/S_1$  is significant because  $S_2 \dots S_2$  is required to be

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<sup>20</sup> Plato's reputed advice in *The Seventh Letter* relates to the "immaculate" nature of Forms, the fact that any description or reference is a violation in principle. For a text, see "Epistles (Plato)/Seventh Letter," *Wikisource*, [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Epistles\\_\(Plato\)/Seventh\\_Letter](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Epistles_(Plato)/Seventh_Letter). However, Plato clearly believed that the true in relation to the Forms was accessible and could be produced in a way that was both internal and external to the project that would appear to fail in its attempt to articulate truth (i. e., the dialogs). Camillo's "theater" was a similar material staging of a "forecourt" to the Temple of Wisdom, compared to the system of lights defined by the Cabala as the three-part soul. The purpose of this forecourt was to grant conditional access to an "impossible" domain. See Lou Beery Weneker, "An Examination of *l'Idea del Teatro* of Giulio Camillo, including an Annotated Translation, with Special Attention to his Influence on Emblem Literature and Iconography," dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1970. Camillo's theater, accordingly, used a lipogram in the form of a missing compartment in its 7x7 schema of rows and seats of a semi-circular auditorium. This missing space was displaced from the first row to the second and assigned the value of Apollo. In its place was the designation of "The Banquet of the Gods," itself a story about the absence of the twelve resident gods of Olympus on the occasion of their "invitation" to a banquet in Ethiopia. Macrobius speculates that this has to do with the summer solstice and the sun's position in at the extreme south of its annual movement between the northern and southern tropics. The lipogram aspect tells the tale: the absent signifier is the Law as Absence, God as unconscious. In this we move past the conscious God who makes everything possible, to the dead God, who makes everything necessary but impossible (privation), to the unconscious God, who requires everything to but *just-ified* (prohibition). Ortho-psychics resides in this third state, where its condition is represented by ortho-graphics.

“rational” (lawful) *in order that*  $S_1$  be fully irrational. “If God exists, then everything is permitted.” Žižek notes that this is the religious fundamentalist’s predicament: “For him, God fully exists, he perceives himself as His instrument, which is why he can do whatever he wants, his acts are in advance redeemed, since they express the divine will...”)” The  $S_1$  exists not as “God.” This God occupies the position of signifiers, a chain of causal linkages that follow their own self-given Rule. The determinism of the denominator of this expression comes about as a freedom: do anything you want, because you know it’s already sanctified. This seeming freedom is actually repressive. Any attempt to find an exception fails. There is no space or time that is not already structured by divine providence. Whatever one does, it’s already been taken into account by Divine Purpose.

Here is the reason that atheism is, in reality, the purest religious position. The alternative to the God of the signifiers,  $S_2 \dots S_2$ , is the non-existent or dead God. But, this converts the *necessity* of the signifying God, where everything in advance is already approved, to *impossibility*. The “everything is possible” becomes “nothing is possible” (privation). Another option is required, an option that draws from the irony that a non-existing God is still a kind of divinity. This is the position that God exists, but that He is unconscious.<sup>21</sup> More radically, God is *the* Unconscious. Something like this idea appeared in New Age literature following the discovery of the polarization of brain functions by the right and left hemispheres.<sup>22</sup> The most

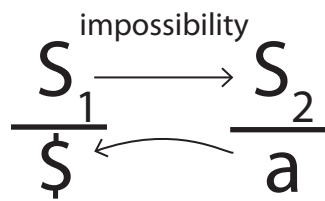


Figure 3. Lacan’s *matheme* for the discourse of the Master mirrors/inverts that of the *matheme* of Analysis. Thanks to the irony of the Master’s desire for recognition ( $S_1$ ) from other masters ( $S_2$ ), the resulting fight to the death represents a forced choice situation; an impossibility with an “and yet ...”

famous exponent of the evolutionary role of hemispheric differentiation was Julian Jaynes, whose limited clinical evidence drew universal criticism. However, Jaynes spookily echoed Freud’s earlier association of the unconscious with an entity that “wishes to speak” but falls short of clear, normative speech, producing instead a set of hieroglyphic rebuses. This enabled Lacanians such as Mladen Dolar and Michel Chion to explore the “acousmatic voice,” shifting from the neuroscientists’ phenomenon of the acoustic hallucination to the idea of an “offstage voice,” authoritarian and enigmatic. Iain McGilchrist would describe this in relation to a more generic sensitivity, roughly associated with the right hemisphere, to general environmental conditions — a “sense of place” that, unlike perspectival awareness that locates a specific place for the observing subject and frames the cone of vision with a set of fixed horizons, representational planes, and shadow lines, is sensitive to generic turbulences that are not able to be assigned a determinate location. Like quantum phenomenon that engage each other in relationships of “spooky correspondence,” this sense works as an “emissary” to the detail-focused “master.”

<sup>21</sup> Slavoj Žižek, “God Is Dead, but He Doesn’t Know It: Lacan Plays with Bobok,” *Lacan dot Com (Is Jacques Lacan in the U. S.)*. [http://www.lacan.com/essays/?p=184#\\_ftnref3](http://www.lacan.com/essays/?p=184#_ftnref3).

<sup>22</sup> Julian Jaynes, *The Origins of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1976). Iain McGilchrist has, however, argued that bicameral differentiation is manifest in a contrast between the function of “paying attention to details” *versus* awareness of general contextual conditions. *Master and his Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019). The shift from the acoustic hallucination to the *acousmatic* (= unlocatable) voice points to the contrast between framing functions, where the subject occupies a particular point of view in reference to objects within the visual field (“cone of vision”), and orthographic/orthopsychic functions, where the subject as point of view essentially disappears, and objects within a generic field acquire hallucinatory and enigmatic prophetic value.

Lacanian would, of course, reverse these terms, showing how the master *signifier* is the acousmatic enigmatic messenger and how the attention-to-detail functions of (perspectival) consciousness dominate, as “salient,” in all our accounts of normative knowledge of the environment, the organizing of signifiers into sensible chain-like relationships ( $S_2 \dots S_2$ ). The distinction, however, is the same. What is acousmatic and spooky is actually calling the shots, while consciousness, committed to its self-image in relation the Symbolic’s signifying systems ( $S_2 \dots S_2$ ), ignores, calling it “confusing” or “disturbing.” What is, after all, the  $S_1$  if not confusing and disturbing? What better represents this confusion than the hieroglyph or rebus puzzle?

The “master” signifier has the same relation to the idea of mastery adopted by the ego in Hegel’s parable of the Master and Servant. In short, the master signifier is not identical to the master, the subject who seeks mastery. This human Master is bound by the irony of signification’s double register, from which he suffers as a divided and barred subject,  $\$$ : that in claiming superiority, the would-be Master must claim *something to someone* and, in the process, attribute to that someone a mirror of his own claim. A Master among masters has no alternative but to “fight to the death” (or at least to the extinction of mastery) to resolve this ambiguity.<sup>23</sup> The ego-based Master has made mastery the agent of a process that will suppress him as subject. This master is by definition “castrated,”  $-\phi$ . The Other — other masters — oppose the claim of the master signifier and, in the process, produce the surplus *jouissance*, the remainder, the Lacanian *objet petit a* (little other, enjoyment) to structure signification.

FORCED CHOICE “IF” = “your honor or your life!”

honor	life	possibility?	
<del>T</del>	<del>T</del>	<del>F</del>	the either/or cancels this option
T	F	F	the master must die, but the family lives in honor (the “hero option”)
<del>F</del>	<del>T</del>	<del>T</del>	the master lives without honor
<del>F</del>	<del>F</del>	<del>F</del>	the master dies dishonorably

Figure 4. The truth table analysis of the Master’s Discourse reveals it to be a forced choice, but with interesting differences. The first line is cancelled because the question is put as an either/or selection. The third line allows the master to live but without honor; the fourth has the master die in shame. Only the second option truly survives. The master must die, but honor is transferred to the *family* of the master, which becomes the agency of the name. Is this not the universal custom that founds paternalistic societies? And, is it not extrapolated from the hypothetical death of God?

The impossibility of the Master’s insistence on recognition should be studied carefully. It constitutes a forced choice in the sense that the contextual situation (the demand is made to other signifiers, other masters) requires that the masters fight to the death to resolve the matter. Thus, the *name of the father* in cultural/historical terms is associated with military achievement and heroic sacrifice among the nobility, for whom the family name means everything. At the same time, the forced choice’s impossibility returns to the Venn diagram condition, the overlap between the two propositions (honor/recognition or death), where ~~TT~~, ~~FF~~, FT, and ~~FF~~ leave only FT. The TT option is cancelled because of the “or”; and the two options where death is result means that honor will be had but life will be lost. This, obviously *is* a commonly realized cultural option, meaning that the discourse of the master is a viable reality only at the collective level of families sharing the name that has been cleansed by the honor of death.

<sup>23</sup> Lacan, in devising the “discourse of the master,” was highly influenced by the lectures he attended given by Alexandre Kojève, transcribed in *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr. (New York: Basic Books, 1969).



Figure 5. Peter Brueghel the Elder, *Het Luilekkerland* (*Land of Cockaigne*), 1567. 52 cm × 78 cm, Alte Pinothek, Munich, Germany. The conjunction of a Golden-Age style land of plenty and open-season sexuality made carnival the perennial exception to the linear temporality of the solar calendar. Other days of exception, such as the Roman Saturnalia, also featured the inversion theme, requiring masters to serve their servants. The Medieval custom of saying mass backward during such periods gave depth to the association of the devil with both details and corners.

The cultural–collective success of the Master Discourse options in light of the failure of the (coward) who survives but loses honor vividly illustrates how the question of recognition “advances” discourse from the “impossible” level of the individual to the “possible” and even “all things are possible” level of the collective. If the master is connected, as he always is, to the ultimate theological master, the issue is even clearer. “If God is dead, then everything is possible” is the theological version of the Master’s Discourse. God is dead “at the level of the signifier,”  $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ . But, as with the courtly love rituals of the troubadour, isn’t it the case that restrictions/prohibitions at the level of the signifier convert the “impossibility” of all else to an “anything is possible” situation? As a theorem of forced choice, where the negativity of the proposition, as Bruce Fink has said, “sucks all the available positivity out of the victim, the master? But, what if line two

and line three reach a compromise?<sup>24</sup> What if the master “lives but doesn’t live”? What if the master is dead but “doesn’t know that he has died?” We have the formula for the unconscious, the grounding condition of the split in the split subject between consciousness and unconsciousness, \$.

We do not have to regard the theological version of this as a Lite compromise between the “God is alive” and “God is dead” options. If God is alive, everything can be done because God is alive at the level of the signifier. When God dies, *contra* Dostoevsky, nothing is allowed. If God is not dead but unconscious, the third possibility comes into being. The God who does not know he is dead (the Lacanian formula for the unconscious) allows everything, but this is an everything that has been converted from impossible to the possible and even *all things are possible*. In this there is not simply a *carte blanche* to do whatever one wants, but an implicit mandate to enact a phantasmagoria, an orgy of elaborations and variations. The “all things are possible” is not simply the polar contradiction of the “nothing is possible.” The first condition of possibility opened up the contingency of the post-Edenic world, where everything was possible. The second suffered the binary reversal of God’s Law, sin. Here, nothing was possible. In the third possibility that God is not dead but unconscious, everything is again possible but placed beneath the flag of the carnival, where sin is not sin but a *mandate to perform* the “everything option.” Without this three-step conversion, the negativity of Law could not be converted to the positivity of the Law of Upside Down.

<sup>24</sup> Bruce Fink, “Alienation and Separation,” 85: “If alienation is the necessary ‘first step’ in acceding to subjectivity, we must take into account that this step involves choosing one’s own disappearance.”



At this point, the contrast between the Union Model of sex and the Use Model is clear. The Union Model is not up to the *Law* of the Upside Down, while the Use Model is the very essence of it. In fact, the Use Model seems to have been the basis for all of the imaginary “instruction manuals” for the phantasmagorias. This is not simply a demonstration of the Union Model’s limitation to romanticized fantasies about love. It shows how the Use Model of sexualization pertains to the culturally significant foundation of cultures based on the transferability of honor and, hence, the role of ancient families as *refuges* (Vico: “asylums”) for non-family members who pledge their *honor* at the price of their willingness to die. Without this transfer, the extension of society from small family units held in place by the worship of ancestors (the *manes*, the *lares* and *penates* of past “heroes” — *hero* originally meant, simply, a dead man) would have been impossible. Small groups fixed by ritual devotion to permanent locations of worship would have been unable to adopt to changing conditions or expand into new territories. The principle of honor, as a “forced choice,” allowed culture to advance from a “Promethean” stage to a “heroic” stage, and for the hero’s *katabasis* (descent into Hades) to be displaced into the narratives of heroes wandering the face of the earth as living adventurers, able to return not just from Hades to the living but from the Other-land domain of monsters and marvels to home.

With so many major features of cultural development of stake, it becomes even more apparent that Lacan could well do with Vico as an ethnographical associate who not only supplies footnotes at the right time but allows Lacan to include the mythic, heroic, and modern stages of the “ideal eternal history,” which Vico saw as a scale-independent temporality applying even to micro-moments of experience. Vico should have been Freud’s go-to guy for cultural/historical connections to history’s unconscious paraphernalia rather than Jung. But, of course, Freud was looking for someone younger rather than older, and certainly not dead. But, as for Lacan’s relation to Vico, let’s consider using the unusual critical fiction that Vico, like God, is not actually dead but only unconscious; and that *his* unconscious is the series of signifying chains,  $S_2 \dots S_2$ , that allow Lacan to “do whatever he wants.” The payback in Vico’s terms is that his  $S_2 \dots S_2$  chains are, reversely, “haunted” by the premature presence of Lacan as an  $S_1$  ghost-master-signifier, which we should call, because it sounds more interesting, ghost-master.

The idea of a Vichian “agency of the undead” releasing Lacan to achieve, rhetorically, what he could not achieve through conventional discursive means, is not so far-fetched. We have, first of all, evidence that Lacan has indeed chosen this specific rhetorical ploy. By fashioning his speech after the enigmatic rebuses of the unconscious, using *lacunæ*, *anacoluthon*, *prosopopoeia*, *aposiopoeisis*, and other tricks of twisting, turning, and animating the normally dry presentation of conjecture, Lacan came close to duplicating the private language he found so fascinating in the case of Christine and Léa Papin, who created a sensation by murdering their employers they served as domestics. Lacan noticed that the sisters spoke in a “private language” that made little sense to outsiders. Their exchanges seemed to violate the idea that speech is public; theirs was not only like the unconscious, it *was* an unconscious: a mind that developed as an unconscious existing *between* the two. Could Lacan have got the idea that his own speech could induce a similar kind of “public unconscious” through the introduction of “resistances” to conventional interpretations?

We have evidence that Lacan indeed did consider his public speaking as a form of teaching that transferred the project of knowledge from speaker not just to *a listener* but to the collective of listeners who, as an external unconscious, would constitute the active agency of a knowledge “that does not know that or

how it knows.” I contend that Lacan’s concept of transfer was in some ways identical to Vico’s, although it seems evident that Lacan developed his idea independently, while Vico seemed to have drawn from practices historically present within the traditions of rhetoric. Along these lines, I see no reason to distinguish between Lacan’s psychoanalytical invention and Vico’s historically informed version. The idea must be rethought with every application in a new context; it is the ultimate *ad hoc* (or ersatz) experiment.

*your money or your life, hah hah!*

There is something funny in being forced, and the forced choice is precisely the logic of (sexual) use that reveals rape to be a staging of elaborate complicities. I say complicities in the plural because several silent collaborations must take place, not just between the two subjects engaged in sex but between the imaginary *dramatis personæ* required for fantasy to offer sex its practical substrate. The rhetorical creation of a collective unconscious to function as an objective “thinking machine” set to the modality of the unconscious’s mentality of rebuses, hieroglyphs, sigla, and the like links these two thinkers at a level so fundamental that the temporal separation and intellectual differences become irrelevant. It is critical to map out the points of contact between these two *automata*, these “AI devices,” Vico’s and Lacan’s, to avoid thinking that these thinking machines are just ways of characterizing difficult writing and speaking.

The first step of this project involves recognizing how the forced choice condition relates to the joke. And not just any joke. The Cretan Liar is possibly the ultimate jokester, in that his joke goes to the heart of humor as human: a recognition of the short circuit between that which *frames* the subject of speech and that which sets up the channels by which that speech is transmitted. Let’s not limit ourselves to the Cretan’s joke about his lying ways. The special joke form known as the *Witz*, cited often and to great effect by Slavoj Žižek, involves the metalepsis that lies at the heart of the Cretan’s quip. Žižek enjoys telling the joke about the rabbi meeting a colleague in a train station who asks him where he is going, and when he gets a truthful response, reprimands him for fooling him in this way. My favorite is the wife at the death bed of her husband, asking him his last wishes; when he asks her to marry X and she exclaims that X was his worst enemy, he responds, “Exactly.” These metaleptic masterpieces use the content demanded by one person of another to reveal how the frame that has been used to exclude another content. Because the *content* of speaking (*énoncé*) has been hard-wired to the act of speaking (*énonciation*), the “or” of the forced-choice “syllogism” has gained a silent enforcer. The choice (good cop) has standing behind him a bad cop to make sure the choice will be “an offer you can’t refuse.”

The enforcer is a bad cop but a funny guy. His mission may be painful, but the pain is related to the desire of the Other, to be *used*. This use involves a special kind of inversion. As Lacan quips in Seminar V, the masochist asks her sadist love, “Hurt me!” and the sadist replies, “No!” Lacan reports that he did not get many laughs from this one, but the wager of creating a rhetorical collective AI device comes with risks. Sometimes the audience is just not in the mood.<sup>25</sup> Bad audience or good audience, the point is that *there is an audience*. This is a “hearing in a clearing,” a theatrical moment in which what happens at the level of the signifier,  $S_2 \dots S_2$ , like the unconscious God that is Stage Three in Dostoyevsky’s corrected theology exam (living, dead, unconscious), is the efficient cause allowing, out the streets, unlimited fucking. We can have a good laugh at this because inside, where the troubadour is suffering at the hands of the *belle dame sans*

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<sup>25</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Formations of the Unconscious*, Seminar V, 1957–1958, trans. Cormac Gallagher, for private use only; seminar 4, Wednesday, 27 November, 1957, 3.

*merci*, elaborate poetic arguments are made that will have little or no effect. Their *failure* is what is needed; the impasse on the inside opens the floodgates on the outside: the carnival. The carnival is precisely the AI device of unlimited semiosis; the poor poet struggling within is the speaker with marbles in his mouth, Vico and Lacan making a mess of things with their barely signifying entanglements and failed attempts at humor. Their money-or-life situation has made the servants in the street into masters; has made the blind see and the lame able to walk. It has put food into hungry stomachs and provided enough wine to make everyone drunk nine times over.

Although the situation inside the chamber of the Lady and her Lover is ascetic in extreme, we cannot make the mistake of locating *jouissance* outside and sexual dysfunction inside. In fact, the case is the reverse. The Union Model would have it that the poet is simply extending the stage of elaborate foreplay, that outside the peasants know nothing of this art of erotic privation. But, isn't it the case that, privation will convert to prohibition once God has become unconscious? Won't the Law make everything possible only when its demand to "Enjoy!" is set inside the blinded tower of the Panopticon in the name of indeterminate absence?<sup>26</sup> For the unconscious cannot insist in the fashion of the conscious God, the clearly visible guard in the central tower. It can only *ex-sist*, as an internality externalized, "ex-ed," to the point where it is present only outdoors, where it is neither present nor absent, but simply unconscious.

We might say that life in the streets is simply mindless, or we might take the radical step to assert that, in the streets, life is *the mind* — that, in other words, the *act* of speaking has distilled itself as *pure act*, and as a result the content of speaking has shrunk and been assimilated within the muscularity, motion, and staging details of the frames that have turned city streets and public buildings into presentational scenery. There is no more Other to command enjoyment as the forced choice of the "Enjoy!" How does this happen? In Lacan's own testimony, we have the recommendation that, for starters, we must favor the signifier over the signified:

If it is in fact a question, in connection with the creative functions that the signifier exercises on the signified, of speaking about it in a worthwhile way, namely not simply of speaking about the word but to speak, as one might say, with the grain of the word, to evoke its very functions, perhaps the subsequent teaching this year will show you that there are internal necessities of style, conciseness for example, allusiveness, even some sting.... [These] are perhaps the essential, decisive elements necessary to enter a field of which they control not only the avenues, but the whole texture." (Seminar V, 13th November 1957).

Owen Hewitson comments: "Here we find a rare moment in Lacan's teaching where he provides us with a tentative answer to the exasperated critic who accuses him of not saying what he means. What's more, his answer is pretty accessible provided you grasp one of his most fundamental ideas: that the signifier itself has determinative effects irrespective of the signified — whether those effects are in symptoms, on the body, or on the nature our relationships with others. Lacan takes his stylistic license from what he

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<sup>26</sup> The command to "Enjoy!" epitomizes the condition of the forced choice in that choice is presented as an option for the subject to employ personally, to effect a preferred outcome instead of enduring an involuntary and undesired punishment. But, the forced choice's pleasure actually belongs to the Other who offers the choice, knowing in advance that the subject can only choose one option, thanks to the framing conditions that will not allow a truly free choice. The victim of "your money or your life!" cannot enjoy the money he/she keeps if dead. Thus, the command to "Enjoy!" the forced choice is a palindrome that appears to flow to the subject but in reality flows to the Other.

calls above the ‘creative functions that the signifier exercises on the signified.’<sup>27</sup> We are returned to the Wittgensteinian moment of considering not just when bodies on the battlefield turn from being corpses to cadavers, but how the ambiguity of simple words such as “table” create a fog over the idea that names exist to indicate things. We think of a piece of furniture but then admit that the furniture could turn into a railway schedule, or a verb indicating that a motion has been defeated. Each of these leaves a residue that drifts into the others’ meanings; the result is that any solid signifier quickly becomes a pronoun whose destination is left blank; a “ticket to nowhere” nonetheless covered with all the official stamps and references. This ticket in fact bears the important Lacanian mark, the punch, the *poinçon* (◇) that authenticates without saying for what the authentication applies. This is where privation, not having any place designated as the “destination” (a signified for the signifier), becomes *prohibition*: we have the blank spot but with the addition of an order not to do something or another (the unconsciousness of the Law). So, if God is not dead exactly but simply “forgotten that He is dead,” then we and Him are Between the Two Deaths that, in all cultures, specify that momentum takes no notice of literal termination. Thanks to the blank ticket, the train sails right past the border crossing marked Death and into the in-between zone where, by definition, we have “done something wrong” but don’t know how to clear ourselves, how to “come clean.”

Is this zone fogged in with the ambiguity of the signifier? Or, is it more like the court room where the troubadour is pleading his case? Or — and this seems to be the best contemporary clue — is it the courtroom scene of the coroner’s inquest into the death of Madeleine Elster in *Vertigo*? Hitchcock inadvertently reveals the algorithm of the Lady, in her double as a sexual object (Judy) and an unapproachable Ice Queen (Madeleine). While Judy’s resistance to desire is staged in green (her dress, her apartment’s lighting), Madeleine’s resistance is condensed into the red of the ruby jewel. The green/red paradigm resists the simple symbolism of desire v. passion; it’s more like enigma and the empty center of enigma. The courtroom indeed calls a “finder” (*trobar* in Old Occitan) to bear witness, but his testimony is entirely constructed by the Other, Gavin Elster, who has manipulated Scottie into being the ideal voyeur. Scottie doesn’t know that he knows (*kenosis*). His unconscious is “out there,” at the level of the signifier, but beneath the floorboards of this founders’ room, so to speak, is the wild  $S_1$  master signifier, the switched identity plot. The  $S_1$  can “run wild” beneath the  $S_2$ ’s as long as the courtroom contains the  $S_2$ ’s within its architecture of determinate cause-and-effect chains.

The judgment of the inquest condenses to the ticket without any destination printed on it, the essence of the negative punch, ◇, that authenticates it thanks to the reference to the permanently empty pronoun, Judy–Madeleine. So, this is love? Scottie’s paradox is that it’s love as long as his *kenosis* remains at the level of the signifier, in its chains of leading and following. Once it accedes to the master signifier, its fall is vertiginous, a true *mise en abîme*. One frame encloses another, then is enclosed by another, with the result the essence of the series of recursive figures in  $x = 1 + 1/x$ , the irrational  $\phi$ . Because the series goes on forever, it cannot be mapped onto a 2d surface, or rather the surface itself must be curved and closed; or possibly it’s paper that we write on (right on?) both sides at the same time, an obversity.

This might have been obvious to a mathematician from the point where the double Lady came into view. The double figures in famous cases of irrational numbers, such as the oracle’s instruction to double the size of Apollo’s altar at Delos to end the plague. The solution involves the cube root of two, or, in more

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<sup>27</sup> Owen Hewitson, “On Lacan’s Style — A Prelude,” Lacanonline.com. <http://www.lacanonline.com/index/2013/11/on-lacans-style-a-prelude/>. “That the signifier itself has determinative effects irrespective of the signified”



Figure 6. Scottie and Madeleine at the entry-way to Scottie's apartment at 900 Lombard Street on Russian Hill. Madeleine is dropping off a letter which, because Scottie arrives in person, she folds and puts away ("purloins"). There is another folded letter in this scene. The metal "deco" railing can be no accident, except that the proximity of Chinatown would make such a decorative motif at an entrance not unexpected. By the "folded letter" of the hieroglyph, the film is able to refer to the "Delian Paradox," the problem of how to double the cube to end the plague of Athens, but Scottie's disability limits him access to the "remainder," represented by the top of the tower of the Mission San Juan Bautista, the "accursed share" that, as in the case with irrational numbers, is recursively added to perfect the function of placement. See The Golden Ratio (why it is so irrational), *Numberphile*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sj8S-g8qnjOg>,

any such ideas in his mind and did not notice such tiny details as iron railings or concepts as large kenotic testimony. But, Hitchcock's favorite literature included "The Sandman," a story about a hypnotic automaton constructed by an itinerate eyeglass salesman; and his reference to the journal published in San

prosaic terms, a third "degree" added to the first two that can be modeled with a compass and straight-edge. The third can be solved, not *on* paper but *with* paper. The medium is *literally* the message! Any third degree equation can be worked out using origami.<sup>28</sup> One folds a letter to conceal what's written; the paper folds to conceal the irrational, the doubling of the mass to deal with bad luck. This reveals the secret of the Delian Paradox, that doubling lay at the heart of the matter from the very beginning.<sup>29</sup> I can't help but note that the letter in Edgar Allan Poe's short story, "The Purloined Letter," remains folded and sealed throughout; we never learn its contents. It is the empty courtroom, where testimony goes too far but not far enough. Scottie's too-high and too-low vertigo finds the center. His "letter" can be found on the iron railing of his apartment: an approximation of the Chinese symbol for good fortune which, when inverted (like horseshoes in European cultures), signifies bad fortune.

Love (or sex) in Union Model terms would not be the thing for Scottie and Madeleine. It would be the case, rather, that the <> conditions of his Lady, the MadeleineJudy composite, requires the Lucretian Use Model, a back-and-forth, green-red, *palintropos harmoniē*. It could be objected that Hitchcock never had

<sup>28</sup> Zsuzsanna Dancso, "Euclid's Big Problem," *Numberphile*, Mathematical Sciences Research Institute; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Lm9EHhbJAY>.

<sup>29</sup> The literary theme of the double is expanded in four directions, constructing a cartographic quadrature with unique *cardo* and *decumanus*. The doubling of identities can be done in space or time, adding the theme of time travel. And, the *mise en abîme* of multiple frames (the vertigo theme) relates to the Ninth Canon of Spencer-Brown's *Laws of Form*, where the outermost frame of the series is re-inscribed into the most interior position: the themes of the story-in-the-story and the contamination of reality by the dream or work of art. These "detached virtualities" fill out Slavoj Žižek's sketchbook of "the reality of the virtual," a conjecture about how Lacan's Borromean-ring of RSI (Real, Symbolic, Imaginary) is held together by the "nothing" of a supplement, which can be either *added to* or *subtracted from* empirical presence. This  $\pm$  feature is mathematically important, since it is capable of fixing precise *location* through a *palintropos harmoniē*, a back-and-forth strategy of "too much and too little" or (temporally) "too late and too soon," both <> situations that empty out the "orthopsychic" and "orthographic" middle term, which is, as it is in the rhetorical syllogism, the enthymeme, "silent" (A is B, B is C; therefore A is C, thanks to the "silence" of B). The enthymeme documents the construction of Vico's "common mental dictionary" model of the collective unconscious. The audience "knows" because it "does not know" (Baudelaire: Thank God we all misunderstand because otherwise we could never agree).

Francisco by Ambrose Bierce, author of another favorite story of Hitchcock's, "Incident at Owl Creek Bridge," about a Confederate spy executed by Union soldiers during the American Civil War, who "has forgotten that he is dead" and, after the instance of execution, escapes his captors to return to his plantation. In consideration of Scottie's rooftop chase in the opening moments of the film, it would not be out of line to conjecture that Scottie, too, had actually died in this scene; and that his subsequent adventures take place in a topsy-turvy Hades whose antipodes stretch tight a wire of vertigo, between Madeleine and Judy, both more and less than the ideal Lady.

It would be impossible to imagine Scottie and Madeleine under the flag of the Union Model of love or sex. Their relationship is one cut from the cloth of the troubadour and his Lady. When Scottie brings Madeleine back to his apartment after rescuing her from her (faked) suicide-drowning attempt, he has to undress her while she is unconscious. Moralistic interpretations of this in the Union Model mode miss the point. The Use Model "explains" the cruelty of the Lady in her relentless torment of the lover. She compels his desire only to frustrate it. The *pain* of lack is the aim: a pure *jouissance* of sexual use in its obverse, "folded" form. The lover can see the written letters but cannot understand what they say. It is as if Scottie can see and say the word "love" but the message for him is the letters mysteriously "turned over" to show that they are really hieroglyphs, as in the Nat King Cole song, "L is for the way you *look* at me ...."

This process of metonymic replacement finds, in each conventional meaning, a "use value" akin to Marx's idea of use value in commodification. In contrast with exchange value, use value is "objective." It reduces the product to something physical that has a relation with the physical bodies of those who use/own it. If I buy a winter coat with fancy fur trim at the collar, my use value is that it's actually a very warm coat; but the exchange value has to do with the fur trim as a stylish feature that will get me compliments and make my friends think I'm able to afford expensive clothes. The objectivity of use value goes further than being simply the practical side of a value-based communication, the sign that I can afford an expensive coat. Just as the warmth of the coat is felt as an interior, private relationship, garment-to-body, the use value is a kind of *Gegenstoss*, a "going to one's ground," where signifiers are to no avail and pleasure lies outside of the public systems of signifying relationships.

When Madeleine folds the note she was about to drop off at Scottie's apartment, Scottie "sees the letters" but not the message. The real message is a non-message, permanently *physical* and *privative*. It is radically literal. He only sees the letters. This is their *agency*, that they are hieroglyphs and radically material. Scottie does not have access to their conventional public meaning; he is within the unconscious where he sees Madeleine naked but is prohibited from doing anything about it. Although nakedness implies that Scottie "can have his pleasure any way he wants it" with the unconscious Madeleine, his *jouissance* comes from the lack the lover feels in relation to the beloved. Because Madeleine is unconscious, Scottie can do nothing. Privation has converted to prohibition. The Law has absolute domain.

The Union Model knows nothing of this "use value" that provokes a *Gegenstoss*, a literal impasse. Critical interpretations of the apartment scene unintentionally base their moralistic disapproval of Scottie's disrobing of Madeleine. Usually this criticism is accompanied by its inverse: the fact that Scottie saw Madeleine naked but did not molest her indicates that he is homosexual or impotent. The duplicitous Union Critic condemns Scottie for first taking advantage but then scores his failure to take further advantage as a sign of weakness. I would claim that all Union Models involve such passive aggression, because they cannot address *jouissance* other than a pleasure initiated by the subject. Use Models require us to see

how *jouissance* emanates from the Other as a kind of command (“Enjoy!”), a command that converts a privation into a prohibition. *Because God is unconscious, nothing is possible*. The popularized Lacanian slogan for love, as giving what you don’t have to someone who doesn’t want it, shows how, in cases of mutual lack (privation), symmetry is everything. If the Other is unconscious, it reasons, then the subject’s paralysis amounts to a spiritual purification. The Use Model’s reputation for unbridled sexual license (as *per* the writings of its most famous exponent, the Count de Sade) is simultaneously ascetic and ecstatic, or as Lacan would say, ex-static. It can “stand outside of itself” in its separation from the object of desire; it can realize its Use Value in the objectification of sex. What saves the human subject in this situation, Lucretius advises, is that sex is not really necessary. We do it and get on with it; we use our lovers and/or they use us without reflecting on the “meaning” of the act. But, this is not a de-humanizing turn from significant human love to animalism. Rather, it cleanses love of its romantic affiliations with misidentification of the lover within the Symbolic. By engaging the unconscious, the literal, the *objective*, the Use Model achieves a higher order of spiritual engagement. It, like the puritanical exercises of the troubadour and his ice queen, aims at ecstasy/ex-stasy through the lack that is the essence of *jouissance*. If Scottie fails to love Madeleine, it’s because Madeleine both exists and doesn’t exist (she’s the actress who is the efficient cause of Scottie’s final/material cause, his testimony at the coroner’s inquest). He has been *put to sleep*. Or, in a more radical interpretation of the film’s opening five minute roof-top chase scene, *he is already dead*. Hitchcock, following the model of “Incident at Owl Creek Bridge,” whose author he cites directly in the film, is using the death dream option, the ultimate in the “unreliable narrator” device, where the audience is made aware of what the point-of-view character *cannot see* for the simple reason that he does not know that he is dead.

Scottie as hero (originally the Greek word meant no more than “a dead man”), like other heroes, is destined to visit Hades (“the invisible”). By this, we also mean that he operates in a non-perspectival space-time, a topological rebus of fate. The *katabasis* (descent) theme is evident in the film’s title and references to falling. Lucretius’s gravitation model of *clinamen*, where signification is felt rather than indicated — through absences, resonance, and displacements — we must acknowledge that Lucretius’s even-flowing atoms (Joyce’s pun suggest paradise: “Eve and Adam’s”) may or may not be parallel. Thanks to gravity’s relation to a central point rather than a plane, falling is always a falling *in to* a center; the labyrinth always has a plan, even though it is *a*-planar. Topology reduces the would-be map-maker to a traveler who must count turns to keep from getting lost. Number theory is necessary to distinguish a knot from a tangle, and to know just which 2 it takes to tango.

If the parallel lines are really radial, as “falling” necessitates, then the orthography of the fourth wall section that Scottie uses to frame his “picture relationship” to Madeleine (he is the ideal *spy*) will be based on movement across the surface rather than the impossibly remote point of view that parallel lines would require.<sup>30</sup> Orthography described as a version of perspective theory requires an infinitely distant viewpoint; but of course orthography, as a-perspectival, identifies the viewpoint with the surface of representation. The parallel lines are not perpendicular to the picture plane but, instead, identical with the picture plane. As the hand moves, so does the eye. With each movement the frame changes; the scene in the background is qualitatively different rather than just the adjacent piece of a continuous background fabric.

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<sup>30</sup> This issue is taken up by Paul Emmons, “Phenomenology and the Architect’s Orthographic Eye,” in Roger Conah, ed., *A Carefully Folded Ham Sandwich: Towards a Critical Phenomenology* (Montreal: F&D Design House, 2013), 51-71.